

# As Trump weighs options, Pence meets with Supreme Court contenders

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence has met with some of the contenders for the Supreme Court vacancy created by Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement, The Associated Press has learned.

The meetings took place in recent days, according to a person familiar with the search process. The person did not specify which candidates Pence met with and spoke on condition of anonymity Wednesday to describe the private search process.

President Donald Trump has spoken with seven potential candidates and is set to announce his decision on Monday.

Trump has said he'll choose his nominee from a list of 25 candidates vetted by conservative groups. Top contenders include federal appeals judges Brett Kavanaugh, Raymond Kethledge, Amul Thapar and Amy Coney Barrett — all of whom spoke with Trump on Monday.

Trump has also spoken with Thomas Hardiman, who has served with Trump's sister on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, according to a person familiar with the conversation who also was not authorized to publicly discuss it.

Another candidate considered a top contender is



President Donald Trump greets supporters after arriving at the Greenbrier Valley Airport in Lewisburg, W.Va., before attending a "Salute to Service" dinner, Tuesday, July 3 in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.

Joan Larsen, who serves on the federal appeals court in Cincinnati.

The president spoke by phone with Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah on Monday. He's the only lawmaker on Trump's list.

Trump's choice to replace Kennedy — a swing vote on the nine-member court — has the potential to remake the court for a generation, as part of precedent-shattering decisions on abortion, health care, gay marriage and other issues. Recognizing the stakes, many Democrats have lined up in opposition to any Trump pick,

and Republican lawmakers and activists are seeking to shape the president's decision.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., has told colleagues he may not vote for Kavanaugh if the judge is nominated, citing Kavanaugh's role during the Bush administration on cases involving executive privilege and the disclosure of documents to Congress, said a person familiar with Paul's conversations who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Some conservatives have pointed to Kethledge as a potential justice in the mold

of Neil Gorsuch, Trump's first Supreme Court nominee last year. Both Kethledge and Gorsuch once served Kennedy as law clerks. Kethledge, a Michigan Law graduate, would add academic diversity to a court steeped in the Ivy League.

Since Trump said his short list includes at least two women, speculation has focused on Barrett, a former law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia and a longtime Notre Dame Law School professor who currently serves on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.



In this image taken from video, people climb on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor Wednesday. A person scaled the statue's base and forced its evacuation shortly after several other people were arrested for hanging a banner from the pedestal that called for abolishing the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

## Protester scales Statue of Liberty's base, forces evacuation

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A woman protesting U.S. immigration policy climbed the Statue of Liberty's base and forced the monument's evacuation on the Fourth of July hours after several other demonstrators had hung a banner on the statue's pedestal and had been arrested.

About 100 feet aboveground, the climber engaged in a roughly four-hour standoff with police before two New York Police Department officers climbed up to the base and went over to her. With the dramatic scene unfolding on live television, she and the officers edged carefully around the rim of the statue's robes toward a ladder, and she climbed down about 25 feet to the monument's observation point and was taken into custody.

The woman had participated earlier in displaying a banner calling for abolishing the federal government's chief immigration enforcement agency, said Jay W. Walker, a member of Rise and Resist, which organized the demonstration.

The group initially tweeted that the climber had "no connection" to the demonstration. Walker later said she was involved but others had no idea she would make the climb, which wasn't part of the planned protest. He said he didn't know her name.

The climber ascended from the observation point, National Park Service spokesman Jerry Willis said. Visitors were forced to leave Liberty Island hours before its normal 6:15 p.m. closing time, he said.

Earlier and farther below, at least six people were taken into custody after unfurling a banner that read "Abolish I.C.E.," Willis said. The message referred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a part of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE officers arrest and deport immigrants who are in the United States illegally, among other duties.

Willis said federal regulations prohibit hanging banners from the monument.

New York-based Rise and Resist opposes President Donald Trump's administration and advocates ending deportations and family separations at the U.S.-Mexico border.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said the president's immigration policy is a step forward for public safety.

Under Trump's zero-tolerance policy, the government has begun requiring border agents to arrest and prosecute anyone caught entering the country illegally. That resulted in more than 2,000 children being separated from their parents within six weeks this spring.

Under public pressure, Trump later halted his policy of taking children from their detained parents. A federal judge in California ordered the Trump administration late last month to reunite the more than 2,000 children with their parents in 30 days, or 14 days in the case of those under age 5.

"Abolish ICE" has become a rallying cry at some protests around the country and for some prominent Democratic officials seeking to boost their progressive credentials.

Trump said on Twitter last week that abolishing ICE will "never happen!"

Protests and evacuations at the Statue of Liberty are rare but not unheard of.

Last February, someone hung a banner reading "Refugees Welcome" from the observation deck. The sign was taken down about an hour after being discovered.

A year earlier, a West Virginia man with psychological problems was sentenced to time served after calling in a bomb threat. His call forced the evacuation of Liberty Island, sending 3,200 people on boats back to lower Manhattan and New Jersey.

The statue, a gift from France, was dedicated in 1886. It became a welcoming symbol for immigrants and refugees coming to the U.S.

## MABBOTT: Made \$96,624 as city planner

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pay bump for the duration. According to salary data provided by the city of Umatilla in the fall of 2017, Mabbott's salary was \$96,624 and Pelleberg's salary was \$110,000.

City councilor Mel Ray said during Tuesday's city council meeting that the decision of who to name as interim city manager was "one of the hardest decisions I've made since I've been a councilor."

"We looked at this from every angle," he said.

The council spent more than two hours in executive session last Thursday after Pelleberg's announcement and spent more time behind closed doors Tuesday night before Michael Roxbury made a motion to appoint Mabbott as interim city manager. Roxbury, Ray, Mark Keith and Ashley Wheeler voted in favor while Selene Torres-Medrano and Roak TenEyck voted against.

Earlier in the meeting, councilors approved a letter of congratulations and thanks to Pelleberg, and took the time to thank him in front of the audience for fostering new growth and change in the city during his two years as city manager. Roxbury said Umatilla has had many city managers but was not sure he could point to one who has "moved the bar as far as you have."

Mayor Daren Dufloth said it was appropriate that the city was discussing a large transfer of government power in the city on the eve of the Fourth of July, when the country was celebrating the freedoms and democracy that allow for such things.

Pelleberg said he would certainly be back to check on Umatilla's progress, and that he had been proud to be able to talk of new housing in Umatilla and revenue growth without raising taxes, while getting together with other city managers whose cities struggled with those things.

"A lot's happened," he said.

### SIP agreements

On Tuesday the council also discussed Strategic Investment Program payments that Vadata Inc., a subsidiary of Amazon, will make to the county on three building projects. Two —

in the Port of Umatilla and off Lind Road, known as the Bonney property — are in Umatilla city limits, while a third off Westland Road south of Hermiston is in the county.

The Strategic Investment Program is a 15-year incentive that communities can offer to companies looking to expand or build there. State statute dictates the first \$25 million in real market value of the capital project is taxed at the usual rate. A community service fee equal to 25 percent of the project, up to \$500,000, is also assessed, with more flexibility on how it is divided among the districts. Additional "annual improvement payments" can also be negotiated at company and county discretion.

Umatilla County signed a SIP agreement with Vadata in August, and the county and city have been in dispute about it since. The county negotiated a \$4 million annual improvement payment, and Pelleberg claims the city should get at least half of it since two-thirds of the sites covered are inside city limits (the city of Umatilla annexed the Bonney property last year). The county, however, created a formula to split proceeds from just the two projects within city limits, and under that formula Umatilla will get roughly \$1 million per year.

Pelleberg has publicly stated that Umatilla has spent \$6 million

in staff time, infrastructure improvements, roads, attorney fees and other expenses to accommodate Vadata while the county has spent "nothing." A document the city provided the county in October titled "City of Umatilla investments for Vadata projects" listed \$6 million for the Bonney site alone, mostly for "city share re-use system expansion" and "city share water system expansion."

The county has questioned that number, however, and Pelleberg has not provided further information after requests from the *East Oregonian* for more records. In Tuesday's agenda packet Pelleberg included a new table titled "City of Umatilla investments for Vadata projects as of 6/28/18" that listed a total of \$3,126,719 in expenses, almost all of which is categorized under a water reuse project at the port site. It only lists \$22,713 in "water and sewer service analysis" for the Bonney site.

Doug Olsen, the county's attorney, said in a recent interview that as far as the county is concerned, the \$4 million issue was "finished" when the city of Umatilla signed onto the main SIP agreement in August. County commissioner George Murdock said the SIP money is a "huge blessing" and will help the county balance its budget, and the community service fee will give special taxing districts a boost.

On Tuesday Pelleberg said the city was still in dispute with the county about the \$4 million annual improvement payments, but recommended that the council sign a resolution supporting the county's plan for the second tier of SIP money: the \$500,000 community service fee.

The county recently approved an agreement to give up its own portion of the community service fee and divide the funds among six special districts, with about 64 percent going to Umatilla County Fire District #1. Mabbott said the city had been "informally approached" about giving up its own portion to the special districts too, but it can't afford to do so because of expenditures made in support of the Vadata projects.

"We were not part of these discussions, for the record, but the good news is the formula is one that works well," she said.

The council voted unanimously to support the deal but made it clear they only supported the decision on the community service fee, not the annual improvement payments.

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